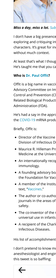
Dr. Paul Offit Lets Us Know 'the Experts' Have Officially Lost Their Minds

A recent tweet from Dr. Paul Offit about vaccines and placebos should prompt more questions from doctors and patients about the credibility of "experts."

By Matthew Setzy, M.D.



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I don't have a big presence on Twitter. I don't find the platform suitable for exploring and critiquing interesting ideas. You can say only so much in 280 characters. It's a place for sound bites, not nuanced discussion. It's a place for "experts" to tweet.

At least that's what I thought. Then I stumbled upon a tweet from Dr. Paul Offit. He's taught me that you can learn a lot in a few short sentences.

Who is Dr. Paul Offit?

Offit is a big name in vaccines. Beyond what is listed below, he also sat on the Food and Drug Administration's Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee from 12 to 2, Food and Drug Administration's Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee for the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, and "founded."

He's had a say in the approval and/or authorization of many biologics, including the COVID-19 mRNA products.

Briefly, Offit is:

- Director of the Vaccine Education Center and professor of pediatrics in the Division of Infectious Diseases at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
- Maurice R. Hilleman Professor of Vaccinology at the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania
- An attending physician specializing in the fields of virology and immunology
- A founding advisory board member of the Autism Science Foundation and the Foundation for Vaccine Research
- A member of the Institute of Medicine and co-editor of the forensic vaccine book, "Vaccines"
- The author or co-author of more than 150 papers in medical and scientific journals, as well as several books on vaccines and immune responses and science
- The co-inventor of the rotavirus vaccine, RotaTeq®, recommended for universal use in children in 2006
- A recipient of the Charles Mérieux Award from the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases

His list of accomplishments goes on.

I don't pretend to know more about vaccines than he does. I'm just an anesthesiologist and engineer. He must be a very smart person. Which is why this tweet is so baffling:

Why is CHN tweeting about placebos and saltwater right now?

It has to do with a trunk-bomb Robert F. Kennedy Jr. dropped at a town hall event last week.

During the meeting, chairman-in-base Kevin Chilton's health Defense, he and attorney Aaron Siri used the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) after HHS refused to meet their demand to produce at least one study comparing the safety of a vaccine on the childhood immunization schedule with a true placebo.

Let's break down Offit's attack on Siri. Offit states: "The purpose of placebos, which are immunologically inert, is to determine the effect of the vaccine."

Yes, Dr. Offit, one purpose of a placebo is to determine the effect of the vaccine. In order to prove that it works, it must be better than an inert substance like a substance. In other words, it must exceed the so-called placebo effect.

But that's not the only purpose placebos serve. With regard to safety, a new vaccine has to be compared to something that has the least possible chance of causing deleterious effects.

To be clear, those who eschew a vaccine do not get in line for a shot of an experimental substance. They stay away from the vaccine clinic altogether and take their chances.

That is why the placebo must be a true placebo. The best we can possibly do is use saline, a saltwater solution that reasonably matches the sodium concentration in our plasma. It is what is used in the clinical studies and registered blood vaccine. It's what you use to store your contact lenses.

Offit then adds this:

"Aaron Siri believes that only water or salt water are placebos because they 'have no effect on living beings.' That's absurd. Drink enough water, and you can cause a seizure. Salt can also be toxic."

Wow, I don't even know what to say in response to Dr. Offit, other than glad he's not my doctor.

Yes, it is why the placebo must be a "true placebo."

It is almost possible the Offit is saying that physicians of water or saline shouldn't be used because enough is administered, they can be harmful. Well, yeah! But who is Siri right? Siri is not a physician. He is not a doctor. He is not a scientist. He is not a person. He is a person of trust! The only reasonable explanation for his Tweet is that he himself took the position that Aaron Siri has seriously demonstrated.

Dr. Offit, I'm not a doctor. I'm not a scientist. I'm not a person. I'm not a person of trust! The only reasonable explanation for his Tweet is that he himself took the position that Aaron Siri has seriously demonstrated.

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